

~~MEMORANDUM~~

SANITIZED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6

NLJ - 97-381

By *cbm*, NARA Date 5-1-01

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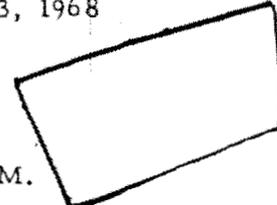
~~THE WHITE HOUSE~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

*For the President
From Walt Rostow*

July 23, 1968

3.4(b)(2)



SUBJECT: The Situation in Czechoslovakia, July 23 - 2:30 P. M.

There is an unconfirmed UPI report that Brezhnev, Kosygin Podgorny and the other Soviet Politburo members have left Moscow for their meeting with the Czechs. A box on the front page of Izvestia indicates a meeting will take place. Press reports from Prague says that there is virtual agreement on a meeting. Kosice is the most frequently reported tentative site, although Bratislava, Prague and Karlovy Vary are also mentioned. Wednesday or Thursday are the times most frequently reported as probable. There is no confirmation of a VIP flight, and the Soviets may be going by train, as they did to Warsaw -- conferring on the way.

Although the American press is headlining that the last of the troops have left, [redacted]

1.5(c)

3.4(b)(1)

estimates that five to six thousand troops are still in the country. [redacted]

[redacted] continuing withdrawals and reductions of radio traffic, but not necessarily complete withdrawal.

The Soviet Defense Ministry has announced maneuvers during the next three weeks throughout the western part of the USSR. Such maneuvers do not fit any normal pattern. It would probably not have been necessary to make this public announcement, covering so much territory, for purely military purposes -- which strengthens the impression that the move is designed for political pressure. We do not have indicators pointing toward an imminent invasion.

It is still not clear what the Soviets may have said in the note reportedly delivered to the Czechs yesterday. *Our* best guess would be that the note expressed concern for the security of Czechoslovakia's western frontier (stopping short of an actual demand to station Soviet troops), raised the arms cache matter, complained about Prchlik's public proposals to change the Warsaw Pact command structure (and perhaps indicated that Prchlik should be removed), and asked for better Czech control of the press.



3.4(b)(3)

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